

let me thank you again for letting all of us, Hillary, Chelsea, and me, make this part of our life's journey with you, for your constant reminder in ways large and small that though we have all fallen short of the glory, we are all redeemed by faith in a loving God.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. J. Philip Wogaman, senior minister, Foundry United Methodist Church; Bishop Felton Edwin May, Washington Episcopal Area of the Methodist Church; and Washington, DC, City Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 2, and his wife, Noel Soderberg Evans. Rev. Wogaman also serves as a spiritual counselor to the President, along with Rev. Gordon MacDonald and Rev. Tony Campolo.

Remarks at a Tribute to Senator Hillary Clinton in New York City

January 7, 2001

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. First, let me say what a wonderful thing it is for Hillary and Chelsea and me to be here with Al and Tipper and with all of you.

I want to be brief today because this is Hillary's day, and it's also a day when she very much wanted the Vice President and Mrs. Gore to come here and receive from you the kind of welcome that I knew you'd give them and that they deserved. I'm so proud of them.

You know, I'm kind of tickled about living in New York. I feel the way Garrison Keillor does about Lake Wobegon. *[Laughter]* I was up here listening to that great church choir, and then our friends Jessye Norman and Toni Morrison and Billy Joel, and how magnificent they were. Then we got the score in the ball game, and I thought, here I am in New York, where all the artists, writers, and athletic teams are above average—*[laughter]*—and all the voters get their votes counted. *[Laughter]*

So I thank you. I thank Judith Hope for her strong leadership. I thank Charlie Rangel for 8 years of wonderful partnership. I thank Chuck Schumer for taking me into his home in 1992, when I was running the first time, with his wonderful wife; and then for taking

me through Queens, letting me see people and places I might never have otherwise seen, and for running in 1998, which everybody thought would be a bad year. It turned out to be a pretty good one, thanks to Chuck Schumer's guts and drive, and he is great.

I'm looking forward—I hate it that I've got to wait 2 more years, but I'm looking forward to Charlie Rangel being the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. When that happens, you mark my words, it'll be the best show in America off Broadway. *[Laughter]*

I do want to say just very briefly a serious word of appreciation to the Vice President and to Mrs. Gore. I thank her for, from the time of the first bus ride that, as Al said, we took here, keeping the rest of us in a good humor, always seeing the glass as half full, always caring about our families as well as our politics, and always sticking up for people who others had forgotten, whether they were people with mental illnesses or homeless people or others, reminding me always that I had to be their President, too. I am grateful to her.

And as I've said many times, and as has already been said here today, there's no question that in the history of the Republic, no person has had such a positive impact on the American people from the Office of Vice President that Al Gore has had. It's not even close—not even close.

I told somebody, he had more influence and did more things—whether it was manage our technology policy, our environmental policy, giving all the poor schools the opportunity to hook up to the Internet, helping to supervise our reorganization of the space program, trying to do something about all the terrible congestion at the airports, dealing with big chunks of our foreign policy—nobody ever had so much responsibility before. And I was showing up for work every day, too. *[Laughter]* I'm really proud of him in ways that you will never know.

He has shown us all, in the last 2 months, under circumstances which have never before existed in our country—and I pray to God never will again—how we should all behave as Americans and patriots. I honor him for my friendship, for his advice, for his leadership, for what he's done for America for 8 years, but in the last 8 weeks, he's shown

us the strength of character that very few of us could emulate if we were in the same circumstances.

Now, I would also like to thank the people of New York who helped Hillary to win this race. She did, as Chuck Schumer said, win it the old-fashioned way: She earned it. But she wouldn't have earned it if you hadn't helped her, if you had shut her out and shut her down and turned away from her. I'd like to thank the people who helped her on Long Island, where the going was toughest. I'd like to thank the people who helped her in upstate New York and proved it wasn't so Republican, after all.

I'd like to thank those of you who had me to your counties in upstate New York. I had a lot of fun being there, and I hope we all did some good together. I want to thank the people in this magnificent city for how good you have been to Hillary and to all of us. I want to thank you for making Chelsea feel welcome. She did a pretty good job for her mother, too, up here campaigning. I think—made a lot of votes, I think.

And I want to thank you for making it possible for me to give my wife good advice about how to run in New York. Everybody said how mean it was going to be. Do you remember what you did to me in the Democratic primary here in 1992? *[Laughter]* I said, "Hillary, look, these people are really good, but they just want to see how bad you can take a beating." *[Laughter]* "And they will beat you up and beat up you and beat you up and take off your shoes and make you walk on coals"—*[laughter]*—"make you lie down on a bed of pins and needles. But if you just keep smiling, they'll know you got it, and they will come."

I'm so proud of her, because she not only laid out a vision for what she wanted to do; she did it in a way that was consistently big and generous, that didn't descend to the level of her attackers. And when New York did to her what New York does and she passed, then you came. And I told her all along—she can tell you—I told her for 16 months, I said, "Trust me. If you are just even on the weekend before the election, you're going to win big. They will come to you in droves, if you just be big and stay right." And

you proved that I was right about you, and I am grateful. *[Laughter]*

But I had that awful primary experience to shore up my gratitude and know what was going to happen. *[Laughter]*

Now, the last thing I'd like to say is this. In 13 days, at high noon, I'm going to give up being President.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Wait a minute, hey. You can "boo" about the nature of the transfer, but not about me giving it up. I've had my time—*[laughter]*—and I had a very good time.

And what I want to remind you of is that politics is not about the politicians; it's about the people. And I am honored to become a citizen of New York. I will do my best to be a good one. And if you need to, call me sort of a de facto case worker for your Senator here. *[Laughter]* I want to get around the State and go upstate and do what I can to help Hillary fulfill the commitments that she and Chuck have made to help the upstate economy and to help the neighborhoods here.

And I want to thank Senator Schumer and Congressman Rangel for passing the new markets initiative Al Gore and I worked so hard on, to build on the empowerment zone proposal that Al ran so well for nearly 8 years, to keep the economy going.

So we want to work. I want to be a good citizen to you. But I want you to remember that Hillary ran and won because of you—not because of her—because of your children and your future and what we want to do together.

So the last thing I want to ask you to do is, I want you to keep your heart burning for 2 years to make Charlie the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. I want you to remember not only for 4 years, but for the rest of your life, what happened in the elections 2000 and what Al Gore did in the 8 weeks afterwards.

But I want most of all for you to remember that America's work and New York's work is never done. And I want you to help my wife do a good job at what she ran for, which was to give people like you and people outside this hall, who will never be in a meeting like this, the chance to make the most of their

lives and their children's lives. That's what I want to ask you more. You've given her a great gift. Now help her use it for the purpose it was intended.

Last Wednesday, when Hillary was sworn into the Senate, I believe that Chelsea and I were the two happiest people on the planet: Chelsea, because she loves her mother and she's proud of her; me, for the same reasons, but also because when I met Hillary nearly 30 years ago now—2 more months, 30 years ago—I thought that she had more capacity and more heart for public service than anybody I had ever met. And I worried when we started our lives together that somehow I would limit her service.

Your giving her this chance, in my mind, has reaffirmed the wisdom she made in moving to be with me so long ago and all the many roles she's played in giving to others and never asking for anything for herself until she made this race. And I can tell you this, you will not be disappointed, because I was right about her 30 years ago.

Thank you. God bless you.

Now, Mr. Vice President, please reenact the ceremony.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at Madison Square Garden. In his remarks, he referred to soprano Jessye Norman; author Toni Morrison; musician Billy Joel; and Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party; Garrison Keillor, host of "Prairie Home Companion"; and Senator Schumer's wife, Iris Weinshall. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Senator Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks at an Israel Policy Forum Dinner in New York City

January 7, 2001

Thank you very much. Thank you. I want to thank all of you for making me feel so welcome tonight and also for making Hillary and Chelsea feel welcome. I thank Michael Sonnenfeldt, who, like me, is going out after 8 years—[*laughter*]*—*and will doubtless find some other useful activity. But he has done a superb job, and I'm very grateful to him.

I thank my friend Jack Bendheim for his many kindnesses to me and to Hillary. Yes-

terday he had a birthday, and now, like me, he's 54. Unlike me, he has enough children to be elected President of the United States. [*Laughter*] And he's had a wonderful family and a wonderful life, and I'm delighted that he's so active in the Israel Policy Forum. I'd like to thank Judith Stern Peck for making me feel so welcome and for her leadership.

I thank Lesley Stahl. It's good to see you, and thank you for your kind remarks. I thank the many Members of Congress who are here and also the members of my Middle East peace team. Secretary Albright and Sandy Berger and others have been introduced, but Secretary Dan Glickman is here, and Kerry Kennedy Cuomo is here, and I thank them for being here.

I want to thank the New York officials who are here—Carl McCall, Mark Green, and any others who may be in the crowd—for your many kindnesses to me over the last 8 years. New York has been great to me and Al Gore and even greater to my wife on election day, so I thank you for that.

We just reenacted her swearing-in at Madison Square Garden. And I was reminded of one of the many advantages of living in New York: Jessye Norman sang; Toni Morrison read; and Billy Joel sang. Meanwhile, at least at half time, the Giants were ahead. [*Laughter*] And so I said, I felt sort of like Garrison Keillor did about Lake Wobegon. I was glad to be in New York where all the writers, artists, and sports teams were above average—[*laughter*]*—*and all the votes were always counted. [*Laughter*]

Let me also say a word of warm welcome and profound respect to the Speaker of the Knesset, Speaker Burg, for his wonderful and kind comments to me, and to Cabinet Secretary Herzog, for his message from the Government of Israel. I want to say a little more about that in a moment.

I want to congratulate Dwayne Andreas, my good friend—I wish he were here tonight—and thank him for his many kindnesses to me. Congratulations, Louis Perlmutter; Susan Stern, who has been such a great friend to Hillary, and you gave a good talk tonight. I think you've got a real future in this business. And your mother sat by me, and she gave you a good grade, too. [*Laughter*]